1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

ON THE SARAMACCA RIVER

484
782
622
539

Grant that I walk with strangers in friendship,
Grant that the white man deal fairly with me.
Great Sky God,
Mother of the River,
Sacred ancestors,
I thank you."

Before the sound of the old chief's voice had died away, Bayo was on the bank again with the great disks of cassava bread in his arms. He covered them carefully and was on his way. His aunt had provided nicely for him. She had given him a large bottle of palm oil as well, and now, if he could but shoot a monkey or a macaw while going up the river, he would have excellent food. The Bakra would be certain to have a drink or two for his paddlers, and some leaf tobacco; and, though he himself was not old enough to snuff tobacco, he would save it for a gift to the father of his betrothed.

He went back to his seketi.

"Ma, a Lamé
A sib' ko' de muye."

On the bank of the next village several women were at work washing clothes. Were they young? Ah, but he must hurry. Twice he had been overtaken.

"Tia, odi! tia, odi! tia, odi!" He spoke to each of the three women separately and finished his "Adiosi" with an extra flourish, for he knew as he paddled away that the circle of cicatrized kamemba and the snake incised in the small of his back below it would gleam in the sun and look alive to the women who watched him make off.

That Lamé obia was a powerful thing!

2

At Gankwe they had been up all night, for yesterday was the eighth day after death, and that night the ceremony of B'oko Dei had to be cared for—until night met day, the villagers said, there would be Anansi stories, and then, after the dawn, the elders would hold council, for one's

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765 head was clearest in the quiet of the early morning. A stillness so pronounced that we could feel it surrounded us at the base camp, for at Gankwe the drums had been replaced in the shrines of the gods for whom they speak, and no more guns saluted the spirit of Zimbi, or warned away the evil dead with the powder which was distasteful to ghosts. Zimbi was buried, the grave diggers had bathed [783] and put on fresh loin cloths, the village had been purified, and all was still.

512 From our shelter, watching the haze lift, we could see that the river had fallen; the tangled grasses at the bank showed fully a hand's breadth of fresh brown that had the day before been under water. With the coming of the sun things began to stir. The lizards appeared, the [231] chickens came to peck at our shoes, looking for crumbs, and boats began to make shadows across the opposite bank, as the Gankwe women in their small corials went to their fields. At the bow would be a little girl, or a yet smaller [868] boy—as young as four perhaps, for the older ones went with the men to learn a man's work—helping to take the boat up the fast water. All this went on quietly, until we espied three boats running down the rapids and pivoting about in the still water toward our landing place. As they 438 came nearer, we could see that the boats carried no load, and our host, the director of the balata-collecting station, explained that these boats were new and were being taken down river for sale.

"All the large boats come from top-side," he said. "The men take them clear around to the Marowyne River by way of the canals and there carry loads in them to the stations in the interior. The Saramacca men are fine canoemen. They like them on the Marowyne. . . . You could 439 use a large boat for your trip up river. Maybe the man will sell one."

[142] The man in charge of the little flotilla stood more than [304] six feet tall. His face was intricately cicatrized, and he carried himself with a dignity and reserve that surpassed even the way of the village chiefs.

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524 The man looked so moved by what he told us that we had qualms about continuing the conversation with him about his dead family, and so we asked him about the game board. "Why is it, Kasanya, that young Amnika of your [322] village said he could not make us a game board, fine carver that he is? You yourself know that the board is just a piece of wood with holes in it for the seeds. It is not beautiful; there are no decorations on it."

765 524 "It is because he is young. His hair isn't white like mine. Making an adji board is a big thing. It's not a little thing. It is on this we play when the body of the dead lies in the house of mourning to entertain his spirit, his yorka. Only [554] an old man who has lost his wife may make a board for this game which is played for the dead."

"But suppose he did make it?"

[176] "Then he would get a kunu, Bakra," he said with an impatient cluck which was intended to deplore the white man's inability to understand simple things.

776 And so again we came to kunu, and since he himself had brought it up, we decided to stir the hole once more to see what was in it. Kasanya talked with less hesitation than we had come to expect. It is easier for an older man who has had experience with the spirits and knows their ways to talk about the supernatural. He understands what he may and may not do, and then, too, with his greater knowledge he can tell more without offending the spirits who disapprove of a man's telling too great a part of his store.

"Yes, Bakra, kunu is a difficult thing for you, a white man, to understand. But we black people know what brings kunu. Many things bring kunu. Look, I made three children. Fine men all three. One died, the second died, the third died. . . ."

688 This was his story. His wife's mother's brother brought the curse on his family. He had cut a new field, and the trees he had felled and the brush he had cut had been lying for some time, as was proper, that the dead wood might [241] be burned off to clear the ground so that the ash might enrich the soil.

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see the shrines to the ancestors and gods. All about were the many houses of the Granman with the elaborately carved posts figuring his emblem. Under the shade trees the widow was pounding rice. She wore old clothes, and, since she would soon be out of mourning, they were almost in rags. The mourning band about her hair was also old.

The Granman's eyes must have followed ours, must have seen us study the outlines of the carving, and must have followed us to the shrines and the woman, for his voice changed, and now he repeated in a ruminating voice, "Yes, here we believe in kunu."

"Ya-hai!" was the noncommittal reply from his listeners.

The Granman looked now into the faces of his trusted chiefs. He looked steadily and long, searching in the semidarkness of the house for a betraying expression, as the chiefs sat on the low stools against the farther wall, their faces averted, as was seemly.

"Well, friends, kunu has made an end of my family. Is it not so? But the clan will go on. The clan's rule is not ended. Up and down the river tell them that, friends. Kunu has brought my family to an end. With me our family rule is finished. That is right. But the clan will go on."

The customary interpolations followed each phrase. Then singly the chiefs took their leave. Rising slowly, after they had received permission to depart, and with body bent, their hands touching their knees, each spoke his farewell.

In the light their ceremonially anointed bodies glistened like polished ebony. Swift and straight each made his way down the clearing and into a side path which led to the river, where the boats were fastened.

"Fine men, these," said the Granman to us after a silence. "And you, have you kunu in your country? . . . "

5

But even after these and many more instances of kunu had come to us, and even though we had snatched a few sentences of explanation from one man and from another, the essential nature of kunu still eluded us. Was kunu, then,

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"In the true, true Saramacca . . . "

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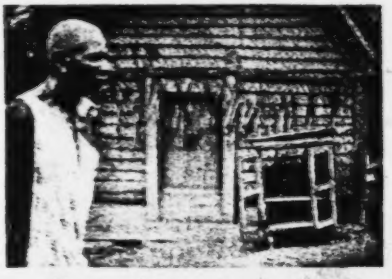
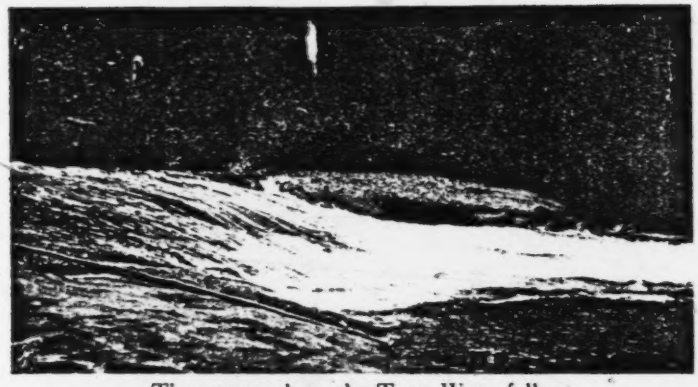


House of one recently dead.

133



The approach to the Tapa Wata falls.

[p. 170 (A)]

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774 at the time approaching a state of possession, had provoked great anger.

"If you do not know what the Dyo-dyo is, then you are not human. Then I won't talk to you. Have you never walked and felt something in back of you, yet nothing was there? Have you never had a dream?"

The Dyo-dyo was one of two souls with which each individual was born, the old woman had later been persuaded to explain, for each man had his akra, his personal soul, which if he were mindful of it, remained with him, and allowed no evil to come to him; and each man had his [795] Dyo-dyo, his wandering soul. At death the soul which had wandered came back to the body. If it were permitted to stray once more, this soul, which had been ever restless in life, would wander about troubling the living.

796 But now, sitting among the women in back of the Gran-
765 man's shrine, it seemed again best to admit that she knew nothing of the adyo ceremony. Fortunately, there was no outburst of anger this time, for here in the true, true Saramacca country, it was soon evident that there was a [186] pride in their magic, and their language, because these were held to be uniquely their own.

"We give a big play for the breaking of mourning." All [534] the drums were played, and the rattles sounded, and the *kwakwa*—the hard-wood bench played with two sticks—was beaten.

[293] For this important ceremony, the oldest living brother of the dead man provided food and rum, and, when the time came to partake of this food, he and the *hei mundu*—the people of rank—sat about the doorway of the widow's house. She herself stood inside the house, behind the threshold, scattering food for the dead, and pouring rum on the [262] ground. Rice and peanuts and sugar cane were thrown away, but not yams or plantains, for those things were not given in their village to the ancestral spirits. As the widow "threw away" the food she wept. In the clearing those who did not eat danced adyo. In a circle, men and women danced in close file, one behind the other, each

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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holding a stick the size of a well-grown boy's arm. Round and round they went, as the widow from her doorway moaned her lament, and guns sounded in honor of the dead. The more important the man, the more guns were fired. Their own men had been the Granman's brothers. There was shooting till . . . till late afternoon, when they could not delay the bathing at the river any longer.

Before dark, all had to go to the river to bathe, and the widow, too, was led there with the others. There she purified herself, and discarded her mourning clothes, drawing on new cloths, and making herself fit with ornaments for the ceremony of rejoicing. This was followed by dancing which lasted late into the night. All the gods might be danced to at an adyo ceremony—Adonko; Vodu, the snake; Opete, the buzzard; Tigri, the jaguar; and all the gods of the bush and the ant hill—and, at the beginning, the seketi social dances and the half-sacred awasa. These dances were held for the spirits of men and women alike, and it did not matter whether the dead, or the living members of the family of the dead, shared these gods with the rest of the villagers, or not.

"But mourning is not over yet," said Fenekonde.

Seven months more elapsed, she showed on her fingers, before a woman might cohabit with her brother-in-law. If there was no brother-in-law to take her, then a woman had to wait twelve months after the adyo ceremony, instead of seven.

"If a woman doesn't care for her brother-in-law," continued Fenekonde, "or he doesn't care for her, then, when the seven months have passed, he comes to her hammock for two nights. Then she can go to another man at once."

When the husband who had died left no brothers, and there was no one else in his family to take the widow, the family of the dead man sought out a husband for her.

"They look and they look, until they are weary," said the Granman's younger wife, "but a man must be found before a woman can come out of mourning."

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765 And Fenekonde said, "Mourning is hard. The widow must not go to the river alone to wash. Other women must take her there. Her husband's spirit might seize her. Her hair must be cut. If not, he will get her by the hair. Her clothes must be ugly. She must keep herself unclean, so that his ghost will not long for her when he sees her."

But mourning was difficult not only for a woman. A man's mourning period was no less burdensome, they added. He too wore old clothes. When he went to wash, his wife's brother took him to the river. If he had another wife, he did not go into the hammock with her, for the dead woman would be envious and would kill him.

765 893 There were times, however, when women did not go into mourning for their husbands. If a woman carried a child in her womb, then she did not put on mourning clothes at all. She did not weep, she was not allowed to show any grief. That same night the dead man's oldest living brother would come with her in the hammock. If there were no brother, another man would come, for some man had to come.

"He must come. It cannot be otherwise. She cannot go to her hammock alone. So it is every night when a woman carries a child in her womb. A man must be with her, for the sake of the child."

3

243 644 In the clearing the widow stood stamping rice. About her the rice hulls flew and made a half circle of gold at her dark feet. Her mortar, which was made of a hollowed-out log, like a drum, was large and reached almost to her hips. On the ground was a large tray which she used for winnowing the rice. With slow, regular beats she lifted and dropped the pestle, and as her body swung with its slow motion the head of the sleeping child on her back rolled this way and that.

768 644 Her two small boys had gone to live in her mother's village, but this girl child remained with her. She was born

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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tradition and authority. The older women's opinions bear considerable weight, for it is chiefly they who maintain the customs of the tribe. The mother-in-law and father-in-law are held in special esteem.

Unlike divorce, death is an occasion of genuine sorrow. If a man's wife dies, he may go into mourning for a whole year. His mourning consists in staying in his hut and doing no work, while his dead wife's family brings him food and supports him. When the year is up, he makes a sacrifice to "the little ground god, Amu" before taking another woman. He slaughters a fowl, letting the blood flow from the throat on to the earth. After this ritual sacrifice a big dance is held, and he is permitted to marry again. It is his next wife who insists upon this ritual.

When a man dies, it is sometimes incumbent upon his widow to have intercourse with his oldest surviving brother and marry him. The fact that he may already be married makes no difference whatever. It is imperative that they live together for several months; after that, if there is no affection between them, they can separate. This is a widespread custom among primitives, and there are remnants of it in the present-day customs of orthodox Jews.

Among the Aucaners it is not necessary for a man to have intercourse with his deceased brother's wife. He must, however, take care of her for a period of six months, after which time she is free to remarry.

A woman may publicly mourn her deceased husband by singing a dirge every little while.

/16 cont./

868 The children learn their dances and games at a very early
858 age and are always present at the festivals.

867 From earliest youth on they are taught to respect and
689 venerate older persons; offenses against this obligatory respect are severely punished.

868 The boys in particular are taken along to the forest at an early age and remain there in connection with the processing of wood or other operations, as well as for hunting and fishing, and very quickly learn to swim.

515 Men, women, and children bathe separately in the river every day.

Chapter XI

Burial Services and Other Ceremonies

764 They celebrate the burial services with great solemnity. If one of them dies in Auca, that is, their land, then the corpse is cleaned, the nails are cut, and it is placed in a coffin, in which various and especially costly articles of clothing of the deceased are placed and to which all the relatives also add a new piece of cloth (usually blankets and pantjes) as remembrances, a farewell token on which much value is placed. Hence they always take care to have a sufficient stock of new and unused cloths.

Ordinarily the corpse lies in the open coffin for one day before the interment takes place, in order to bid it farewell. The relatives then sit around the coffin and weep ceaselessly /17/ in a mostly singsong manner peculiar to them, in which the visitors also join from time to time.

● 765 After the interment the closest blood relatives proceed to hold the days of mourning on a mat spread out on the ground for [538] eight days. During this time they weep loudly by turns, at the same time making the strangest gestures, while day and night, generally by turns, little stories with many allusions, and always ending with a moral solution, are told.

/17 cont./

765 [538] In these tales, called anansitori (spider-head story), the spider usually plays the main role as a personal being.

The close female relatives wear as a sign of mourning for husband, father, and mother, for a year, white or blue cloths around the head and a white cloth around the body. The men wear a white cloth around head and body only for three months, but during an entire year (since they then may not go completely clothed) they cover themselves with only a black loincloth. They also refrain from wearing ornaments for a whole year.

766 If one of them dies in the working place, in the town, or elsewhere, then the corpse has some hair shorn from its forehead and is subsequently buried without ceremonies. This hair is wrapped in a new piece of linen or cotton and brought to Auca, or their permanent dwelling place, where it then undergoes a proper burial, on which occasion all the customary ceremonies are observed as though the corpse were there.

766 787 [824] Whenever one of them dies suddenly or from a strange disease, which can arouse a suspicion of poisoning, immediately after death and before being washed the corpse is placed in a boesipapaja (1) tree (which, split and then tied together, is just

1. It is a hollow tree of very soft and unusable wood which, when split open, resembles bamboo from the inside; the leaves are broad and rasp-like.

like a halved hollow tree) at least five feet long. This kind of coffin is carried from east to west, past all those present, who for this purpose must be ranged in two rows, by two completely strange and impartial men, who are invited from other places for this purpose.

Now the place where the corpse through heavy pressure on the /18/ head forces the two bearers to stand still is where the inquiry begins, and one asks the corpse whether this place where they are now standing still is where clarification can be provided. If one notices a distinct movement of the hollowed-out tree, this is corroboration. If, after the question has been repeated three

/19 cont./

696 he must sit unbound on a large fire arranged in gridiron fashion,
682 so that he burns completely to ashes.

[695] Never, however, is an accused put to death before three months have elapsed after the inquiry, because there still might possibly be a chance that his innocence will be proved.

682 In the case of a confession and the supplying of clear proof
[695] that the deceased gave cause to be poisoned, the culprit frequently
[672] escapes with a light punishment; sometimes also forgiveness is granted with general approval, with the condition that the culprit take upon himself to the third generation the obligation to be of service in everything to the descendants of the maltreated person.

681 It may also happen that in the case of various other misdeeds the
672 perpetrator is completely forgiven for his misdeed, but that upon his descendants to the third generation there is imposed the obligation to render slave services exactly as in the case of poisoning.

681 The majority of these slave services ordinarily consist of giving money, strong drink, or the necessities of life, as a result of which hard work must often be done in order to be able to fulfill them. Every day they are afraid that this or that may be exacted from them. There are indications, however, that not too great a misuse is made of this.

765 Twelve months after the burial there always takes place a great gathering in the hut of the deceased, at which time the period of mourning ends with rejoicing. Exuberant festivities are then celebrated, and that night an unusually great amount is drunk, eaten, and honor salutes fired. Everyone in the vicinity, insofar as he is able, is present on this occasion.

This festival is called tesa, the ending of the mourning period, and begins after one of the nearest relatives, who enjoys the greatest respect, takes a large calabash filled with water in his right hand and with it slowly walks forth out of the hut along the other dwellings nearby and is followed by a large number of people, during which he here and there sprinkles the water,
[775] nowéwatra, in drops on the ground, saying: Like this water, the soul of the deceased will also be pure, and all that was dear to him will remain tranquilly on earth without being disturbed by him who as spirit finds himself in the spirit world.

/20/

765 Thereupon follows a second, who just like the first has a calabash in hand, but this time filled with spirituous liquor, and from time to time sprinkles a few drops of it on the ground, in token of the fact that on this occasion, too, by means of drink, they think of the deceased with joy.

Then they again return to the dwelling, where all are gathered, and celebrate an enjoyable night with song and dancing until daybreak.

Chapter XII

Character, Virtues and Vices

157 [577] The Bush Negro, as I have already said above, has a great deal of respect for old age and for distinguished persons; with respect to their closest relations they are honest, which they can- [461] not pride themselves on otherwise. In their ordinary affairs they [609] are not lazy, but work tirelessly whenever it is necessary. With respect to strangers they are generous and obliging, all the more [152] when they can assume that they may claim reward. Jealousy, [784] envy, and malice are their greatest vices. Concerning many matters they have an antipathy that they call trefoe (treef). Thus, [781] for instance, one will eat something, the other not. Also they are very superstitious in small matters, to which they cling all the way down to distant generations; they call that obia (literally translated, bewitchment, magic).

262 [123] An Auca girl who through attachment to my wife and me has already lived with us in the town for fully five years, because [589] since the death of her husband, who was one of my most trusted workers, she did not want to attach herself to another, and who performed all kinds of housework for us, carries her trefoe of not eating any unscaled fish so far that she will not even cook her food on a fire where there is a pot in which an unscaled fish was previously prepared. I know another one who uses no milk and also does not eat meat of any kind (with the exception of bacon), unless it be game, and then it must be prepared by her, on the grounds that everything is prepared with butter and that butter comes from

/40 cont./

125 [123] In spite of the relations of trust developed between the Boni and ourselves in the course of the work carried out together during four long missions, we were able to take this census only progressively and indirectly, by using simultaneously the following procedures:

—Study of the genealogy of the groups, going up from woman to woman up to the founding ancestress, then going back down from her. These genealogical tables, some of which extend [166] over nine generations and include more than 160 persons, brought [736] to light a certain number of temporarily absent people and individuals who lived away from the villages, isolated in the middle of the Creole gold miners, but continuing to make up part of their group; they also brought to light a certain number of young people and orphan children taken in by distant relatives who would not have spoken about them directly. But on this point, gaps remain;

[126] —Detailed plan of the villages and interrogation of the village heads as to the persons living in each house;

—Interrogation of the women about their dead and surviving children;

—General verification with the help of perfectly trustworthy informants who possessed a thorough knowledge of the genealogy of the groups.

[162] The census, stopped on January 1, 1958, covered 811 persons of whom 667 /41/ were from the villages of the French bank and 144 from the Surinam bank (Kotika). As for the latter, we [765] questioned them individually when they came to the French bank, especially when they came to attend the end of mourning festivities in Boniville in October, 1957. The Kotika census is less [128] exact than that of the French villages, and in addition we were [126] not able to make a plan of the village. For this reason we have not reproduced it in the present work, where only the corresponding genealogical table appears.

/69 cont./

562 828 [191] It is assumed once and for all that women are shrews on whom one cannot count and from whom one can get nothing. The Refugee Blacks are inexhaustible on this subject and their opinion about the women of their group is very similar to that of Africans in general: they call them ill-natured, devoid of feeling, selfish, greedy, and unfaithful.

562 571 [965] In general, women are held apart from regular social life; no form of customary society of women exists. In the mourning ceremonies, which correspond to a veritable mobilization of the village, they play no role, except to prepare the meals.

562 789 794 Yet the women play indirectly an important role in the social life by way of the cults of possession. The Papa gadu gods so formidable have women nearly exclusively as bearers, and we shall see in studying the functioning of the kunu that they are the principal actors in this. Through this activity, which is exerted in arbitrary fashion on the outskirts of the institutions of regular social life, the women maintain around themselves an atmosphere of fear; it is not impossible that the functioning of these cults is influenced by the concern of the women to maintain their privileged position in the society of the Refugee Blacks.

562 157 Many women are charitable and have a certain generosity toward the members of their family, insuring the maintenance of the old men without resources. But their benevolence is essentially subjective and extends only to a small circle of personal friends and their nearest relatives. As soon as the elders appeal to them for a question of general interest, claiming to give them orders or even advice, they meet an attitude systematically malevolent and stubborn. /70/

[613] The lineage heads avoid giving them orders directly, for they run a strong risk of getting themselves insulted, as we have observed many a time.

/135 cont./

593 The same year, G..., man of about 50, particularly serious and hard-working, had saved up enough to buy an outboard motor; his mother, aged near 75 years, advised him absolutely not to make this purchase, claiming that he would be the object of jealousy and was risking being the victim of evil spells; he gave up the project. He did not dare carry it out until [965] 1957 after the mourning for his mother (dead in 1955) had been lifted.

To let one's mother be in need is considered a shame; if a mother has several sons, they divide up the purchases to be made for her benefit; each year one of them will cut the clearing intended for the mother; in exchange she will furnish couac and vegetables as long as her strength will allow her to work.

591 Ordinarily each of the sons, when he becomes 20 or 25 years old, builds himself in his village a house in which he lives alone. But it often happens that a man who has reached adulthood continues to live in his mother's house; for example, in 1952 in Loka village, Ayaubédé, about 40 years of age, was living with his mother Chii.

593 As for the authority of the mother over her daughters, it is [582] still much more strict and lasts all her life. The daughter may not marry without the authorization of her mother or of her [591] female guardian if she is not brought up by her mother. The married daughter has the use of a house that her husband built for her, but this house is situated near that of her mother. Since household life is intermittent and reduced to its simplest expression, she remains under the domination of her mother until the latter's death. Especially, she cannot travel without her permission.

593 In former times the authority of mothers over daughters 178 was tyrannical; they say that one might see an octogenarian mother requisition an old man's arm to strike her sexagenarian daughter who had disobeyed her. But nowadays this authority is battered [579] down by the development of individualism. From this results a growing dissoluteness in the girls and an increasing instability of unions.

/137 cont./

831 necessary food) than by a sentimental motive. It is very rare to meet among them the appearance of sincere and lasting love for a woman; that is sometimes seen, but it is the exception.

562 It is not enough to say that they have few emotional feelings with respect to women. In the conversations heard in the evening around the campfires a deep contempt is expressed on this subject; they even speak of the Boni women as of a foreign and almost enemy nation; they consider them besides as half irresponsible. This attitude shows through in the custom concern- [684] ing adultery, which decrees that the lover be beaten but not the wife.

581 Among the Refugee Blacks marriage is in fact a contract of maintenance between a man and woman, which provides for the execution of such-and-such work by the one for the benefit of the other, and for the wife the obligation to be faithful. [586] This contract can be cancelled unilaterally without any sort of indemnity. It does not directly involve the relatives of the • [765] spouses; it involves them only in case of the death of one spouse, for the surviving spouse must /138/ put up with the subservience [613] of mourning. It is principally for this reason that a marriage must be officially known by both lineages, and that a divorce must be proclaimed without delay.

582 Exogamy. Marriage is forbidden between persons of the same
613 lineage. In expressing this prohibition the Refugee Blacks
614 employ the word bee (lineage in the restricted sense) and not the word lo.

613 As we have seen in studying the situation of the various lineages, the various Boni kin groups follow different rules in this regard:

--The Dju lineage, which forms only one single group from the genealogical point of view, does not allow marriage between its members;

/158 cont./

156 The Boni woman, poor in emotional feelings, and jealous of her independence with respect to men, puts her pride into subsisting by her own efforts.

178 [156] The young women, even the ones with the freest habits, stay firmly attached to their village, to their plantings, and to the mode of life they received from their grandmothers. In fact, because of its structure and customs, the society of the Refugee Blacks has much less likelihood of suffering from the poisons spread by modern life than the patrilineal societies of Black Africa.

761 /159/ Death; Burial Rites

Death is for the Refugee Blacks an event of extreme gravity.

795 In order to ward off danger and permit the yɔrka of the dead person to take its place among the ancestors, the unstinting cooperation of everyone is required.

764 765 181 [621] [619] The ceremonies which have to do with death and mourning are by far the most important ones in the day-to-day life of the Refugee Blacks; for each one they represent a very heavy material load which is accepted without recriminations. It is really a veritable mobilization, which takes place within the framework of the village and not of the lineage. The apparatus set into motion is independent of the lineage, for it must function in the same way for an outsider, Djuka or Saramaka, who dies during a trip.

764 868 767 Participation in the burial rites is for all an essential religious duty. From childhood the Boni are prepared for this task and become, some of them kisimã (coffin-makers), others ɔlɔmã (grave-diggers), some others wasimã (bathers of the dead).

767 467 Kisimã and ɔlɔmã. It can be said that in each village, ɔlɔmã and kisimã constitute customary societies, provided with an organization and wielding veritable powers for the duration of their work.

764 767 [439] /165 cont./ There may be 126 camisas (1) and

1. Pieces of cotton goods about 1.10 x 0.75 meters. These cloths are manufactured in Holland especially for the Refugee Black clientele.

15 large pieces of cloth. About 30 camisas have been taken from the dead woman's trunk; the others have been given by the people present, the near relatives each giving several, the other relatives only one.

Their work finished, the kisimã burn the shavings and [783] scraps of board. They pass their tools through a flame to purify them of the stains of death. /166/

About 3:00 P.M. the coffin is brought into the mortuary shed by the kisimã. The kisimã, who have complete charge of this phase of the obsequies, count the pieces of cloth and divide them up. One part will be used for their pay, others for the pay of the gravediggers. Fifteen pieces of cloth and about [765] ten ordinary camisas will be placed in the coffin. The rest will be used for clothing the widower who, during the whole period of mourning, will thus remain symbolically dependent upon the dead person; if there are any left over, they are distributed to the members of the dead person's lineage.

Placing in the Coffin. About three o'clock four of the [292] kisimã take their places beside the coffin; they gird their loins with a camisa as the Refugee Blacks always do before carrying out a religious act. In the greatest silence they spread out the 15 large pieces of cloth inside the coffin, allowing them to fall to the ground at right and left. Next, two of them lift up the body while the others slip the coffin underneath (for the whole duration of the burial ceremonies, the body must remain at the exact place where it was put down. The coffin does not rest directly on the ground but is put on a mat through the

/172 cont./

764 578 Suddenly an incident erupts. Baafu (Lapé) insinuates that Agidibon (Aw.B.) is helping himself immoderately. Insulting words are exchanged. Agidibon leaves the council. General commotion. The tumult calms down after a quarter of an hour.

764 The speaker now thanks the foreigners passing through, Saramaka and Djuka, who helped at the obsequies.

764 787 Someone puts down on the ground a paddle on which is attached a bundle wrapped in cloth. It is the dead woman's paddle, and the bundle contains her hair. It is kept until the [765] broko dɛ (it seems, in fact, that this is the reason for this celebration) in order to keep contact with the dead woman's yɔrka for the further questions people might have to ask it (1).

1. It seems that on this point custom envisages especially the case of near relatives of the dead person traveling on the river at the time of the death, and who could not be present at the burial.

Then, several ɔlɔmɛ̃ will go to the cemetery to bury the bundle inside the mound.

The spectators go toward a shaded spot, for it is near noon and the sun is overwhelming.

Sosoman carries the front of the paddle and Tansia the back. Without any question at all being asked, they circulate in the village for a long time. Several times I see them make contradictory movements, nod their heads forward and sideways at the same time.

Here they are back again near Tafanié. To my great surprise Tafanié asks questions in a low voice, cupping his hands in front of his mouth.

/174 cont./

764 Children are buried with the normal ceremonies only from about the age of six on. The rule is the following: A child is buried in the cemetery and broko dɛ is done for him if the next child of the same mother is beginning to walk.

766 Young children are buried without a coffin at a special site on the edge of each village; a board is simply placed on the [828] body before filling the grave. They have the idea that very [775] young children have no vital force, and that their yɔrka cannot do any harm. /Fig. 25 appears here./ /175/

764 Mourning

After the burial the wives of the dead man (or the husband if it is a woman), the nearest relatives on the maternal side, as well as the children, sojourn eight days more in the mortuary shed, until the broko dɛ.

• 765 From then on the obligations of mourning are limited, [831] for the near relatives of the dead person, to abstaining for a [775] year from dancing, wearing jewelry or too fine clothes; it goes [171] completely otherwise for the spouse of the dead person; the Refugee Blacks indeed take for granted, like the Creoles of Surinam, the persistence of the sexual jealousy of the dead person, whose yɔrka is thought to remain in contact with the living for a year.

State of the spouse in mourning. The principle is that the surviving spouse, until the lifting of mourning, is subject to the will of the dead person. In order to materialize that in an obvious way, he cannot, during this whole period, wear his usual clothes but must dress exclusively in pieces of cloth appropriated for him from among the ones the dead person possessed, or given by the nearest maternal relatives of the dead person.

/175 cont./

765 For the duration of the mourning, any indiscretion of the
795 surviving spouse will draw upon him the pitiless vengeance of the yɔrka; it is important for him to make himself forgotten, to have a modest and decent demeanor. The dead person might be vexed with him for having kept his health and good looks. So they try to give the surviving spouse the aspect of a miserable
765 and unfortunate being. The dead person's relatives are par-
795 ticularly interested in having this discipline observed, for in
613 the opposite case the dead person's yɔrka would turn back its vengeance against his own lineage. During all the mourning the whole lineage considers itself in danger. So custom requires that during all this period the widower (or widow) be placed under the authority of the dead person's lineage.

765 In the case of concubinage, mourning is taken on by the
SR8 spouse even if the relations have not been made official. People cite the example of Way (Boniville) who assumed mourning for a Djuka with whom she had begun to live before he could propose to her officially.

765 State of persons in mourning. A widower's state is exactly like
[795] that of a widow, which tends to show that in the eyes of the Refugee Blacks the dead, men and women, have the same level of being and the same power over the living.

765 The surviving spouse is placed under the protection of
769 the ancestors of the dead spouse's lineage. Without this pro-
613 tection assured by the prayers of the members of this lineage, he would find himself defenseless. The proof of it is that the
624 principal sanction against him is to lift the mourning prema-
1924 turely by going to the fraga tiki to tell the ancestors that one is no longer interested in him. That amounts indirectly to cursing him (see below the example of Gamba).

/175 cont./

765 613 The spouse in mourning is taken temporarily out of his lineage and placed under the /176/ /Fig. 24 appears here/ /177/ protection of the lineage of the dead spouse, in a situation corresponding to that of the client in ancient /Roman/ society.

[769] He can no longer pray to his own ancestors. If he is sick he asks the elders of the dead spouse's lineage to pray for him to their own ancestors.

765 A man in mourning is freed from certain obligations and responsibilities:

--He cannot take part in a council of his lineage;

--If there is a squabble between his lineage and another, he cannot be taken to task;

--Part of his catch may not be appropriated in case of great nivrée;

--He is freed from his funerary obligations as an ɔlɔmã or kisimã.

765 602 613 A man in mourning is placed under the collective authority of his wife's lineage, but actually under the authority of her near relatives: mother, grandmother, real uncles and aunts. It is real kinship which is involved in matters of mourning; classificatory kinship enters into it only if all the near relatives are dead.

In general it is old women of these near relatives who are charged with watching over the behavior of the widower and on the other hand with seeing that he does not lack anything he needs.

For example Alémin (Aw.B.1) was married to Yundu (L2, G60) of the Lapé 2 fraction, living in Loka village. When she died in May, 1957, he was put under the authority of Asakundu (L2, E55), his wife's grandmother, and of Asakundu's sister [768] Térésa, living in Boniville. Since he had not yet built a hut for his wife, he was enjoined to come specially to build himself a little hut in Loka village in order to reside near Asakundu.

[Text Continues on p. 269]

/47/

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● 765

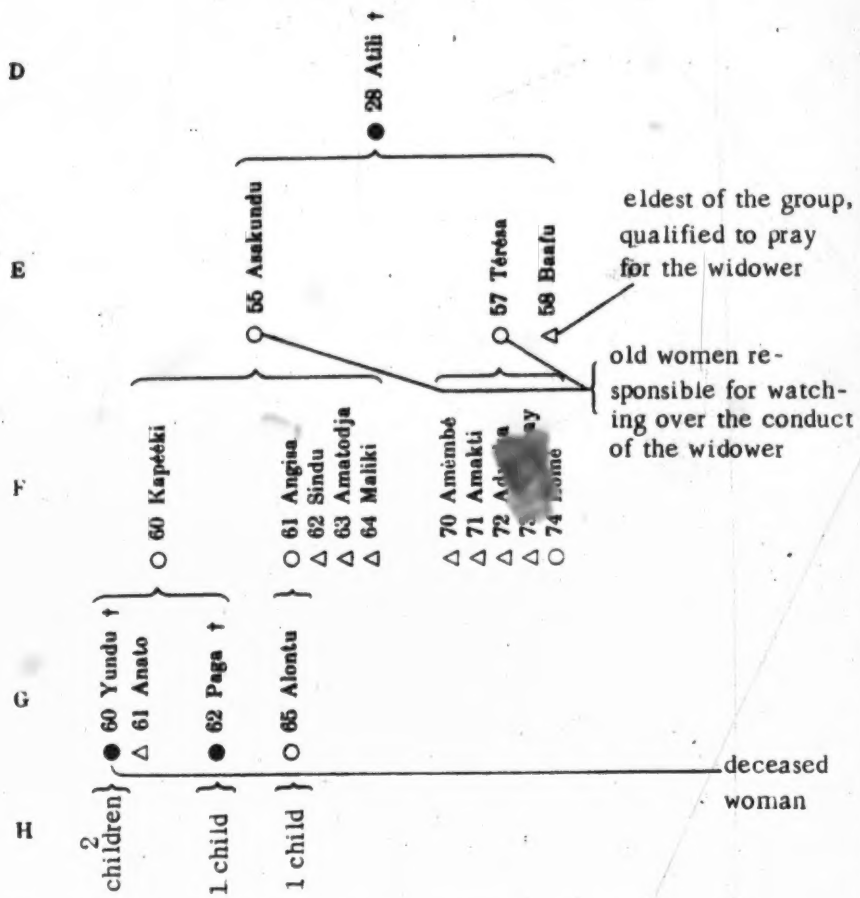

Fig. 24. Genealogy of the Lapé 2 fraction. Functions resulting from Yundu's death.

/177 cont./

765 602 613 If he was sick, it was △ Baafu (L2, E58), the eldest of the group, who was to pray for him. Alémin had nothing to do with the head of the Lapé lineage nor with his wife's classificatory uncles of the Lapé 1 group.

As for Diamanti (Aw.B.2, E56, † in 1955), her husband Booki (K3, E133) spent the mourning in the house that Diamanti had had constructed for her by a former husband. It was ○Emma, Diamanti's mother, and Sanéti, Emma's younger sister, who kept him under watch, under the responsibility of △ Akodo, the dead woman's brother (all the actual uncles being dead). Booki had nothing to do with either the classificatory uncles nor the head of the Awara Bakka lineage.

When Atuku (Aw.B.1, D20) died (1956), her husband Nétali was put under the authority of Kondoku, Atuku's brother, all the uncles in both the real and the classificatory sense being dead.

765 [775] The submission that this mourning entails must not be considered as symbolic. It bears down on the surviving spouse with an intolerable weight which can be borne only because of the conviction that it is the sole means of protection against the dead person's jealousy. Not only does the widower (or widow) do nothing to free himself from it, but at the least indisposition he will add, of his own accord, to the harshness of his state.

765 613 The widower can no longer use his clothes and personal utensils; he keeps /178/ his hammock and gun. All the rest, clothing (appropriated for the mourning), various utensils, is furnished him by the dead woman's lineage. Each woman of this lineage must give him a little of what she prepares. He himself must not ask for anything.

/178 cont./

765 He cannot go anywhere without the authorization of his watchers, and only for a specific purpose. For example, when Alémin found work with a European in October, 1957, the two old women who were charged with looking after him came to deliver him to his employer like a prisoner, making it clear in particular that they were forbidding him to disembark in such-and-such villages where he had nothing to do.

Alémin was authorized to be present at the mourning for his mother, but he did not take part in any of the ceremonies at all. He was not present at the interrogation of the dead woman carried in her coffin, and was not informed about the arrangements made for dividing up the inheritance.

765 768 A man in mourning does not necessarily live in the hut he has had built for his wife, but in a hut designated for him. He may (this is Alémin's case) be invited to build a small hut which, at the end of the mourning, will become the property of his mother-in-law.

When the house has been bequeathed, the heir may take possession of it only if the spouse has not received orders to reside in it. Only at the end of mourning does he enter fully into possession of his rights.

765 [769] A man in mourning may not go out of his house after nightfall, particularly on nights when people dance after having called all the ancestors. He would have everything to fear from the yɔka.

He may circulate in the village and speak to anyone he wishes, but must not joke or be present at any festivities whatever, not even to hear tales. Not only may he not pay court to a woman, but it is still forbidden for him to make discreet overtures, even through an intermediary, with an eye to remarriage.

765 /178 cont./

He may not walk around stripped to the waist and bare-headed; Alémin used to wear permanently a horrible jersey and a holey beret.

765 787 He may neither dance nor sing (even alone). If he has a gadu, this gadu is called and invited not to go to the head of its "master" for the duration of mourning. The doyen of the lineage of the party concerned pronounces this adjuration.

However, a reservation exists. If someone absolutely needs to consult this god, the widower is asked to remove his mourning clothing and put on his own clothes for a few hours. The consultation takes place in private inside a hut; then the mourning resumes.

765 He observes the basic interdiction (bwasi kina) of the dead woman in addition to his own.

He must absolutely spend the yali festival (New Year's Day) with the dead woman's family.

Such are the principal obligations and interdictions which rule over the life of a man in mourning, during a period of at least 18 months, which may even be prolonged up to two years and more (at the end of 1958 the mourning for Yundu, † in May, 1957, was still not lifted, and Alémin did not expect to be freed from it before the spring of 1959).

These obligations are aggravated still more during the first three months by special provisions. /179/

During these first three months, the dipi baaka or deep mourning, the man in mourning must keep an attitude of the most acute sorrow. He leaves the house assigned to him only for indispensable work, and does not go away from the dead woman's village; he remains with his eyes lowered, not looking directly at anyone except members of the dead woman's family. Usage used to require him to lean on a stick like an exhausted person, but the present grand man has abolished that custom.

/179 cont./

765 [769] [778] [613] After three months, an offering is made at the fraga tiki of the dead person's lineage, setting forth how much her spouse has respected her memory and asking permission to lighten the manifestations of his sorrow. The mourning is then lightened, but the man in mourning continues to wear a bandeau around his head or at the very least an old beret.

765 461 [613] During the first months the man in mourning has no other responsibility than to hunt and fish at the order of the dead woman's lineage. He does his own cooking with the food given to him; he cuts a clearing for his mother-in-law or another woman of the deceased's relatives, who will farm it with him.

[431] Next, he receives the order to go and earn the money necessary for the sizable contribution he must bring to the festival of the lifting of mourning. During the entire duration of the mourning he must report on his work and moves.

765 [606] When the end of mourning approaches, he must do a job for the benefit of his mother-in-law, generally redoing the roof of her house or building a boat for her.

[626] These arrangements do not involve any material sanction whatever. Like the rest of the social life of the Refugee Blacks, they rest entirely upon fear of a suprahuman sanction.

[589] After the lifting of mourning, the person in mourning may remarry without further delay.

765 768 [562] State of widows and co-wives of a widower. The state of a woman in mourning is practically identical to that of a widower. She lives for the duration of mourning in her deceased husband's house under the surveillance of his near relatives on the maternal side. [613] [439] The dead man's lineage lends her all the objects she needs and furnishes the imported commodities (salt, kerosene, soap) that she uses. On the other hand, she may freely use the produce of the clearing that her husband had cut for her, since it is taken for granted that these products are the exclusive property of the wife.

/179 cont./

765 431 [606] Before coming out of mourning, the widow must procure for herself at the minimum the money necessary for a demijohn of tafia as a contribution to the festival of the lifting of mourning. She must make a present of several cans of couac to her husband's mother.

765 843 184 A pregnant woman undergoes mourning exactly according to the general law. The custom described by several authors for the Saramaka, according to which the pregnant woman must join one of her husband's "brothers," does not apply to the Boni.

765 888 There are some attenuations of the harshness of mourning with respect to old women. For example in 1956, Lémiki (70 years), living in Boniville, was in mourning for her husband Tabiki (Awara Bakka, but residing since childhood with the Lapé lineage in Loka /180/ where he had been raised by his [768] [602] father). Lémiki alternately spent three weeks in her house and three in her husband's. It was Asamani, Tabiki's sister by the same father, who exercised authority over her.

765 768 [613] This remarkable example shows that as regards mourning (rights and duties), the principle of residence plays an essential role. He who has been reared by his father is in this respect taken out of his lineage, which loses all rights and all control over the conduct of the mourning.

765 [705] The co-wives of a widower are subject to mourning on the same grounds as he, and for the same motive, since they are targets for the jealousy of the dead woman's yɔrka.

[768] However, they are authorized most often to live with their maternal family. When the period of dipi baaka has ended, 765 833 they may take up conjugal relations again with their husband, but at intervals of several weeks and without his being able to spend the night with one of them. Each time he must ask permission of the head of the dead woman's lineage. [613]

/180 cont./

765 613 689 An incident. In 1957, the Saramaka Gamba (75 years old), Way's widower (Dip. I), caused a serious incident by refusing several times the obedience he owed to the latter's lineage, on the pretext that he was old and knew how to behave.

His son Maliki (born of a Saramaka woman), whom he was raising, married to Way's daughter, had gone fishing above the Litani. Upon his return, Kwau (80 years old), Way's elder brother, reproached him for having left without authorization, pointing out that his father, Gamba, being placed under his authority by mourning, he was too, because of this fact. Gamba [578] did not accept this reasoning and the two old men fought. This [769] was a fine scandal. Kwau and the elders of Way's lineage came [798] before the fraga tiki of L'Enfant Perdu village to lift his mourn- [784] ing forthwith (which, let us recall, is the equivalent of cursing him by delivering him over to the vengeance of the dead woman's yɔrka).

Members of Way's family went to break up the shacks of Gamba and his son, who lived hidden in the bush for some time. [627] Then Gamba had the village heads intercede and obtained his [769] pardon. The elders of Way's lineage went to the fraga tiki to [798] utter the words putting things back in order.

765 Lifting of mourning. The festival of the lifting of mourning - puu baaka - is celebrated 18 months to two years after the burial. The delay may be a little longer, for most often the village celebrates this festival for several of its dead at the same time. It is a heavy burden, for festivals for lifting mourning attract many people and everyone present must find as much as he wishes to eat and drink.

[621] This festival is celebrated in the framework of the village and not in that of the lineage. It will be celebrated in the same way for a Djuka who died in a Boni village, provided that he lived there a sufficiently long time. In such a case the expenses

/180 cont./

765 are divided up equally among all the inhabitants of the village. But if the dead person had near relatives in the village, children, nephews, or brothers, it is they who stand the main burden. [613] Members of the dead person's lineage who are settled in other villages contribute equally to the expenses and the organizing of the festival, but in a symbolic fashion. /181/

[123] A council (kuutu) of the village inhabitants sets the date; during the two weeks preceding each one is busy. The women 765 262 hull and winnow rice, prepare great quantities of couac and sugar-cane juice. The busimɛ scour the bush and have meat and fish smoked. Each one, according to his means, buys tafia, sugar, chocolate, and other articles of food liked by the Refugee Blacks.

765 995 The celebration of the rites occupies a whole week. This is because, the Refugee Blacks think the influence of the dead person can be eliminated only progressively by the repetition of the rite of separation.

The first day, the yɔrka of the dead person whose mourning is going to be lifted is called by formulas beaten on the [535] apinti drum. Then possession dances take place.

765 The second day is reserved for the material preparation for the ceremonies to follow.

[613] The third day, the spouse in mourning, if there is one, is conducted by the members of the dead person's lineage under [822] the mortuary shed. He is dressed in red and is congratulated for having kept the mourning well. Then he is led to the river, [983] and old women of the dead person's lineage begin to bathe him [995] while adjuring the yɔrka to part company with him.

The fourth day at nightfall, all those present assemble at the mortuary shed. They recite tales (Anlisi tɔlii), [538] improvisations (mato), and riddles (ɔdo). This phase of the [781] festival has as its object the concentrating of the attention of the hearers; it creates a warm, collective atmosphere which impregnates those present, bringing to them intense and highly colored emotions.

/181 cont./

965 535 533 Next come the dances, always in the order sɔnge, susa, awasa, the rhythms given on the apinti drum. These are not possession dances and do not appear in themselves to have a religious meaning; all involve choruses in which the singers do not accompany themselves on any instrument at all; these songs have no other meaning than to exalt life; the Refugee Blacks find their best artistic expression in them. Many of them demonstrate dazzling imagination; the subjects are extremely varied, and every year new ones are created. But there is a certain number of "classics" which reappear in each festival. Let us mention: "The man who calls his dog lost in the woods"; "The song of the Balen River"; "The woman who watches over her daughter," etc. These songs are very beautiful, and in the great mourning festivals it is difficult to hear them without emotion. Songs and dances follow one another without interruption until the sun's return. This is what is called broko dε, "break a day." This ritual, which has a key value in the eyes of the Refugee Blacks, appears to be the affirmation by the group of the triumph of life over death.

965 [969] The fifth day, a kind of buffet is served to the guests under the mortuary shed. In the afternoon there is the offering of food to the ancestors, ɔwɛ nyɛ; this rite is a communion between the dead and the living.

[969] On the morning of the sixth day, the ceremony ends with the offering of water, celebrated not at the fraga tiki but at the edge of the shed, in honor of the ancestors. They invoke one [978] last time /182/ the yaka of the dead man (or the dead woman), while asking it to separate from his spouse for good and to leave her in peace! "U puu a umɛ a baaka; yu ɛnga umɛ yu paati tide, na: mu siki, na: wɛ sani mu du ɛŋ, a mu dε bɛ. (We lift the mourning of (this) woman; thou and the woman, you separate from each other today; she must not be sick, nothing must happen to her, she must be well)."

/182 cont./

• 965 Then they address the dead person in the name of the people of his village: "We have done with thee, stay there where God has placed thee."

The spouse in mourning is again bathed in the river by old women who have themselves gone through mourning.

[K9] [M5] Then they address the yɛrka of the ancestors and the entities of the Beyond who are imagined to have come in a crowd: "A ia sani di kɔm ya, yu mu luku ala ŋga bũ; u kaba ŋga yu; yu sa: waka ala peesi; (Each one of the beings who have come, be benevolent toward us all; we have finished with thee, thou canst go anywhere)."

On the seventh day most of those present begin to leave. An intimate ceremony brings the dead person's near relatives together in the very house where he died. They weep and lament one last time. Then a last offering of food is made in the same house, and they repeat the adjuration: "We have done with thee; stay where God has placed thee."

[M68] [613] [431] The eighth day, the spouse whose mourning has just been lifted is conducted solemnly back to his village by the people of the dead person's lineage. He is congratulated, he offers food and drink to all those present. What he might have had left of savings disappears on this occasion.

He must sleep three nights in his village, still without being able to have relations with a woman. When this time limit has gone by, he comes to give back the red clothes which the dead person's lineage had lent to him. Only then is he free.

[114] Notes taken in Boniville in November, 1957 on the occasion of the lifting of mourning for Béniti. This festival is given for the lifting of mourning for ○ Béniti (Dju. E5, living in Boniville, † in 1955 at 75), of △ Tito (Kotika, Boniville, † in 1955 at 15), and of △ G..., boy of ten, son of a woman of the village of L'Enfant Perdu (Dip. I), dead in Boniville where he was reared by Térésa. The festival is given more than two years after death. Sometimes, when there is no spouse subjected to mourning

765 /182 cont./ (which is the case here), they wait still longer in order to be able to group the lifting of mourning for several dead people from the same village in a single ceremony. The unfolding of the rites shows that much more importance is attached to Béniti than to the two young boys; in fact, the ceremony is devoted almost exclusively to her.

765 [621] 613 [829]

The mourning-lifting ceremonies in Boniville are particularly interesting, for this village includes members of five different lineages. The distribution of functions and duties allows one to better understand the thought of the Boni relative to social organization; the principle of residence plays the determining role. The ceremony takes place in the village where the dead people lived, whatever their lineage was. The burden of organization is divided up about equally among all the inhabitants of the village. The /183/ members of the lineages of the dead people living in other villages are present at the ceremony, but their contribution is much less important.

765 [251]

On November 8 (day called busimã kɔm) at noon, the festival begins with the arrival of the buchiman who, the week before, had caught and dried fish for the festival.

The buchiman are put under the authority of Tofioto (K). They are all volunteers (one who would excuse himself from rendering this service would lay himself open to being abandoned alone on the day when he would have to bear the weight of mourning for one of his near relatives). The main weight of mourning is borne by Boniville village. The people of the principal fraction of the Dju (Asisi village) furnish a rather large contribution as regards time spent fishing but symbolic as to the furnishing of tafia and imported foods.

[226] [251] [621] [613]

These buchiman had been at work since October 25, catching and salting fish:

765 /183 cont./

	for Bonivilie	for Asisi-Dju
765 Fintiman 221 Kiémenti 251 Doni 621 Alibi 613	sons and grandsons of Béniti (Dju)	3 men over 20 years old
4 young men of the Kotika lineage		4 to 5 adolescents
1 —	Dip. I —	
2 —	Lapé —	
1 —	Papaïston—	
2 —	Poti —	

They furnished a total of two weeks of work but each one collected for himself about 15 kilograms of dry fish.

765 [531] [411] The buchiman, riding in five large canoes decorated with multicolored oriflammes, approach the Boniville wharf where all the young people of the village are massed, the men armed with their guns, the women brandishing banners made of brand-new camisas. The hurrahs resound, punctuated by hundreds of shots. In an atmosphere of enthusiasm the buchiman make their entrance into the village and go to report on their mission to the council assembled under the mortuary shed. According to custom, this council is improvised at the last moment by the elders who are there, without attention to origin, and does not involve any definite authority.

Four baskets of dried fish are put down at the edge of the shed, for the mourning-lifting festival, then each one goes to get and arrange in his house a big personal basketful.

The fish intended for the festival are distributed among the women charged with preparing them.

About 2:00 P.M. the elders are assembled in the western part of the shed; in the eastern part, the near relatives of the dead for whom mourning will be lifted lament.

Several apinti drums are brought and placed laterally.

/184/

765 [535] The buchiman execute the kwadyo dance, which seems to be an African war dance; they hold a stick in front of them and make the gesture of taking aim.

That lasts about half an hour.

The guests continue to arrive individually and settle themselves around the mortuary shed, seated on their little benches.

765 202 About three o'clock the drums begin to beat again. It is Bukuman, master of the art of speaking with the drum, who strikes the summons' formulas; the others give him the cue.

The drum speaks for a long time (1). An elder translates.

> 1. It is more a question of conventional formulas than a language; two different sounds can be obtained from the drum by striking respectively with the fingers and with the palm.

for me approximately: "Other villages, be still, for there is a great festival in the grand man's village."

"We who are now living, we are going to do what our ancestors taught us long ago."

765 [551] Then the dead for whom mourning will be lifted are directly addressed, being called by name if they are men; for the women like Béniti, who cannot be called directly, for women do not have a drum-name, they call one of their deceased near relatives, here Diolé †, Béniti's brother: "Tell thy sister that we are going to part company with her, for we have been in mourning for her a long time and this is the custom, such as the ancestors did before us."

[769] "Ancestors, come, come near us, we are going to pour the tafia and cane juice for you."

[202] (Libations are made within the shed.) Then the drum addresses those present:

765 /184 cont./
[202] "You who with ɔbia so that the machete will not cut you, so that the broken glass will not wound you, what are you waiting for? You remain seated, are you afraid?"

765 786 787 At these words, several of those present stand up and begin to dance, seeking the trance of possession. Some run into the village and come back running, carrying banana-tree stalks. Others drag thorny spathes of awara; two brandish an old, demolished boat.

The drum furiously beats the rhythm of Kumenti. Part of the dancers, taken hold of by a furious delirium, jump and [824] prance about. Certain ones take thorny spathes of awara (2)

> 2. Thorny palm (astrocaryum vulgare) whose sharp thorns nearly 10 centimeters long are particularly formidable. It is impossible to pick up an awara spathe with bare hands without hurting oneself.

under the arm or pass them around the neck.

Part of those present are taken hold of in their turn by trances, including people of mature age and serious character like Fintiman, who is carried off in a faint.

Two possessed people, a man (Ernest, Kotika) and a woman (Awini, Boniville), smeared with pɛmba, are subject to extraordinary contortions. Ernest breaks a bottle over his head with such force that the pieces fly several meters. Both /185/ dance on their knees for an appreciable length of time (but the next day Awini will come to have herself cared for). Those present manifest frenzied joy.

765 535 534 About five o'clock the sɜŋgɛ dance begins. Three apinti drums are placed at the west wall of the shed. The orchestra is completed by an old overturned boat which seven to eight men strike with sticks.

/185 cont./

765 [535] The figures are almost similar to those of the awasa dance, except that the dancers move forward stamping with the left foot.

[533] Songs follow, but entirely covered by the drum and without great musical interest.

Second day, Nov. 9. Day called puu dɛ ("a day is withdrawn"). No rite is performed on that day. Each one is busy with his occupations. The women pound and winnow rice.

Third day, Nov. 10. Day called lolo mata "the pestles are rolled." That day they carry to the edge of the mortuary shed pestles, wood for heating, and everything necessary for the preparation of the next day's food (1).

1. When there is a spouse in mourning, it is on that day that he is brought to the mortuary shed by the dead person's lineage, congratulated, and clothed in new garments red in color.

Fourth day, Nov. 11. Day called poti ala sani na a krɛy ɔsu ("to put all things into the mortuary shed").

About two o'clock the young men who have been to cut wood for heating come back in boats decorated with pennons, in the midst of hurrahs and shots.

At three o'clock the basia circulate in the village, calling the women who appear from all sides carrying heavy baskets of cassava.

The provisions prepared for the festival are brought to the [293] edge of the shed. Many of those present have brought a bottle of tafia. The basia collect all the tafia in large demijohns. In all there will be six demijohns of 15 liters of tafia and as much cane juice.

/185 cont./

765 538 About eight o'clock in the evening, people assemble around the mortuary shed where the drummers and mato (Anansi Toli) storytellers sit. Amèmbé, of Loka village, begins to tell a story which is scarcely listened to, the audience remaining noisy and distracted. The respondents punctuate his discourse with approbations: "hiya ba! na so!" At several [522] passages of the story (when Anansi has succeeded in deceiving his victim), the audience shakes with laughter, the drums beat, the storyteller and his respondents sing and dance. Little by little the audience warms up, participates intensely in the story.

Another tale follows, told by Adiiso, head of the Dju lineage (Asisi). The audience is overexcited, the interludes [535] of dancing become more and more numerous and longer, everybody, men, women, and children take part in it.

765 About eleven o'clock the dances are going to begin in the order susa, sɔ̃ŋgɛ, awasa; at six /186/ o'clock in the morn- [535] ing the next day the awasa dances are carried on. Part of those present go down to the wharf to go home, showing no apparent fatigue.

Fifth day, Nov. 12. Nothing happens in the morning. The people take some rest.

At 3:00 P.M. the young men go around dressed up to the nines; people visit each other from one house to the other, they drink and sing.

765 262 264 About 3:30 the basia circulate in the village, calling the women to bring the ceremonial meal. Tables are set out under the shed. The women each bring a big bowl or basin of cooked rice (about two kilograms of rice). Some add a bowl of sauce or cooked fish. No meat.

The basia lay out all that on the tables. There are about 80 bowls or basins (which represents a handsome effort, the rice harvest having been bad), about 50 bottles of soda, several boxes of pastries /biscuits/ and Dutch cheeses.

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/186 cont./

Fintiman directs the ceremony. He divides all these dishes without distinction of origin into several lots, one for each lineage.

[515]

All the guests go down to the wharf to wash in the river, then put on new clothes before participating in the ceremonial meal.

[613]

The people of each lineage go to eat on their side; a bowl is carried to the people in mourning, like Alémin, who remain confined at home. But the near relatives of the three dead for whom mourning is going to be lifted take part in the ceremony.

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About four o'clock the women are seen to appear again, carrying a small bowl of rice accompanied by a little fish and peanut sauce. They put them down on the ground at the edge of the mortuary shed.

Banana leaves are arranged at the edge of the shed (north wall, on the side facing the river).

The elders, seated on their little benches, gather together in a half circle. Fintiman and Bukuman take a little from each bowl, spread it out on the banana leaves. They call by name the dead for whom mourning is being lifted, Béniti and the young boys Tito and G..., speaking to them in a familiar conversational tone as if to living people whom one invited to eat.

Several persons come to eat a little of the food.

At 5:00 P.M. Fintiman has five small boys of five to seven years line up, each provided with a basin, in front of the food spread out on the ground. At a given signal they rush forward, each one carrying away what he could cover with his basin. They leave a little of it, which will stay there all night. The next day the left-overs from the buffet prepared for the living will be added to it.

/186 cont./

765 In the evening the young people dance in front of the houses of several men who have given the tafia, but that no longer has the character of a ceremony. All is over at eleven o'clock in the evening.

On the sixth day, Nov. 13, at seven o'clock, the elders assemble again in front of the /187/ banana leaves where a little of the food offered the day before remains (dogs and chickens have eaten part of it).

A long palaver begins, disconnected and disconcerting, whose purpose escapes me. The clearest thing coming out of it is that the captains make known what the grand man (absent from the ceremony) told them in the morning. They thank the grand man for this festival which has gone off without any incident; they say that they can be counted on if some mourning rises in another village.

[291] [535] [177] Todo makes apologies to the grand man because the young people were dressed in a new style (large loincloths /calimbés/ reaching to the ground) and danced several Creole dances. He says to the audience that this does not conform to custom and that the true Boni dances are sɔ̃ŋgɛ, susa, awasa.

Next Fintiman pours water gently on the banana leaves, calling the dead whose mourning is being lifted. "We pour water for you, watch over the people in your family, over the grand man and over those who have worked for the mourning, that they may be in good health, that nothing bad happen to them. We have done with you; stay where God put you."

765 775 [268] While pronouncing these words, Fintiman breaks his dead mother's bench and dish (for the dead boys, nothing had been brought). It is a question not only of marking the break with the living but of procuring for the dead woman what will be necessary for her in the Beyond. For this purpose a paddle is also broken, which her son Klémenti prepared for her, and calabashes prepared by her daughters.

/187 cont./

• 765 Since there is no spouse in mourning (Béniti had been divorced for a long time), the ceremony stops there.

Then those present scatter in the village, go to dance, eat, and drink at one another's houses. They have the satisfied air of people who have just done an important job successfully.

[602] On the seventh day an intimate ceremony brings together Béniti's children and grandchildren in her daughter Kulina's house, where she died. After an offering of food, they weep and lament a last time. Then Fintiman, her elder son, repeats the formula of separation:

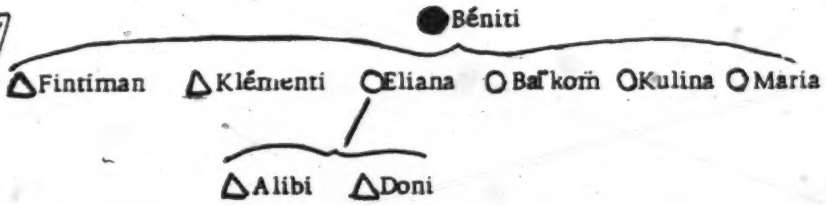
"We have done with you; stay where God has put you."

Lifting of mourning for Béniti. Division of expenditures.

[613] [621] Béniti belonged to the fraction of the Dju lineage settled in Boniville; the principal weight of the mourning therefore had to be borne by that fraction, the other (the one in Asisi) bringing a symbolic contribution.

Béniti left two sons and two adult grandsons:

[601]



/188/ Actually the elder son Fintiman paid half the expense himself, the younger son being ill and without regular

[431] resources. No contribution in money is asked of the women, who must, on the other hand, draw substantial amounts from their rice stock.

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	Fintiman	Klémenti	Alibi	Doni
15-liter demijohns of tafia . .	4 = 14,800 fr	1 = 3,700 fr	1 = 3,700 fr	1 = 3,700 fr
Cases of soda (1,000 fr.) . .	4 = 4,000 fr	3 = 3,000 fr	1 = 1,000 fr	1 = 1,000 fr
Dutch cheeses	1 = 1,000	nothing	nothing	nothing
Boxes biscuits	2 = 1,800	---	---	---
Sugar, kilograms	10 = 1,000	---	---	---
Sugar cane	3,000	---	---	---
	25,600 fr	6,700 fr	4,700 fr	4,700 fr

6:Hurault--287 K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

/188 cont./

765 431 Nearly half of the tafia was brought to the mortuary shed to serve for the dances, the other half was distributed to visitors in the course of calls of personal interest that they were coming to make on the village people at home.

Bénîti's three sons-in-law each gave three liters of tafia.

[613] The Boniville men belonging to other lineages each gave one liter, except the two principal basia (assistants to the grand man for the internal running of the village), Todo and Tofioto, who gave two liters each. Besides, each one kept one or two liters to offer to callers at their homes.

[613] As for the men of the Dju lo of Asisi, they brought one liter each, including the head of the lineage.

All the Boniville women and all the women of Asisi-Dju brought their contributions in the form of food.

In all about 150 adult visitors came.

765 293 One can estimate that about 200 liters of tafia were drunk, or a little more than a liter per person, which, for five days of festivities, is not enormous.

But since some drink very little, one can estimate that those most given to drunkenness drank up to three and four liters.

Inheritance

428 613

The custom of the Refugee Blacks, hostile to all that might divide the matrilineage, cannot accept the notion of a single heir entering into possession of all the property of the dead person and replacing him in his functions. This idea of the only heir considered as a substitute for the dead person, as it exists among the Bamiléké, which leads toward the individualization of one line within the lineage, can be regarded as the extreme opposite of the thought of the Refugee Blacks.

/188 cont./

428 [613] In the custom of the Refugee Blacks, the inheritance must be dispersed among the members of the dead person's matrilineage in the strict sense (bee) and his children. /---/ /189/ The custom of numerous African societies has it that the men inherit from men and the women from women. This notion is totally contrary to the legal thought of the Refugee Blacks. A house, an object, a boat, may pass from a man to a woman or conversely. It is the same with the lower gods with which the dead person might have been possessed.

428 789 764 If the dead person has not indicated before his death, in front of witnesses, the distribution of his property, the same divinatory procedure is used as for the determination of the causes of death: the coffin being carried on the heads of two men, in front of it are lined up the members of the dead person's matrilineage in the restricted sense and his children. The president of the lânti kuutu asks: "To whom dost thou leave thy house?" The coffin moves toward one of those present, then: "To whom dost thou leave thy boat?" "To whom dost thou leave thy gun?" "To whom dost thou leave thy clearings being harvested?"

428 The partial heirs thus designated may enter immediately into possession of their legacies.

428 765 Reserved are what the Boni call the "equipment" of the dead person, that is, his personal belongings, linen, money, which will be divided up after the lifting of mourning.

The customary rule is the following:

[602] For the duration of the mourning, these objects shut up in a trunk are put under the care of the eldest child if a woman was concerned, of the eldest classificatory nephew if a man was concerned. After the lifting of mourning, the distribution is 428 602 made by the dead person's mother, if she is still alive, if not by the eldest of the classificatory uncles or aunts, and if they all are dead, by the eldest of the surviving classificatory brothers or sisters of the dead person.

754 /240 cont./
755 will be obliged to confess: "It is I who killed So-and-So and
787 So-and-So." They immediately inform the grand man, who
754 orders the usual procedure against wisimã: Ceremonies are
766 suspended, the body is transported by boat to a place reserved for cursed people, downstream from Boni country, and it is abandoned in the bush without being buried. Grand Man Difu is trying to modify this custom and to compel burial of wisimã in a special cemetery, but without great success up to now, it seems.

754 There is no broko dɛ. The spouse may remarry immediate-
765 ly. Since the property of the deceased are presumed to be ill-
768 gotten, inheritance is cancelled. The house is destroyed and thrown into the water, the boat abandoned to the current. Personal belongings of the deceased are turned over to the grand man who distributes them to whom he wishes.

The near relatives of persons thus designated are overcome with shame but can say nothing. Not a bit of responsibility is imputed to them.

754 How does society protect itself against the sorcery of the
755 wisimã from beyond the grave? According to Grand Man Difu,
784 this is a problem which does not come up. The wisimã has been killed by Odun as punishment for his crimes. Since every being draws its force from the divine, he has no more force, he is destroyed as a being, he is no longer anything but an empty shadow incapable of doing harm.

754 In fact, among the Refugee Blacks these trials of dead
755 people are very rare. Whereas about 15 persons die per year
787 on the average in Boni country, including about ten adults,
[165] in the last 20 years (1) only about 20 persons were revealed to be wisimã.

1. Disregarding the period 1957-1959 when a definite fresh outbreak of the fear of wisimã was observed.

/265 cont./

796 769 539 "Great ancestors who are in God's country, it is you who have the strength of the village."

(The tafia gushes forth.)

"Drink, drink, but do not get drunk to the point of being deluded, look with favor upon the righteous, scatter the wicked."

796 782 Next, Fintiman goes off to make an offering of tafia accompanied by a few words at the chapel of Odun. Then he goes to the edge of the mortuary shed to pour water, tafia, and coffee on behalf of Samalobi, the grand man's brother, for whom mourning has not been lifted.

He goes next to the house of the deceased grand man Awensay to make an offering of coffee (Awensay, like the other grand men, used to drink coffee).

796 782 829 The prayer of the preceding year (January 1, 1957), presided over by grandfather Samalobi, had had a higher inspiration. After praying in about the same terms as above for the Boni, they prayed for the Djuka, explaining that in days gone by Boni and Djuka had fought, but that all that was forgotten. They prayed next for the Saramaka, then for the Indians, finally for the Europeans. I asked why; they answered: "It is because the Europeans were the ones who brought us to this country which has become ours." /p. 266 is blank/

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CHAPTER VIII

538 765

TALES -- PROVERBS

Tales (Anãsi tɔli) and Proverbs (ɔdo) retain an important social function among the Refugee Blacks. It is always by tales that the great customary ceremonies of the lifting of mourning begin. Their function is to concentrate the attention of the

538 /267 cont./
[765] audience and to create an atmosphere of participation in the rite.

This ritual character makes it so that the Anansi Toli cannot be recited any time and in any old way. The story-teller may speak only at night, in the presence of a respondent and of an audience of at least two or three persons. A ritual formula: "dirinti" -- the response of the audience: "ndaeti," [124] precedes each new story. It is only with extreme repugnance [126] that informants consent to listen to and comment in the day-[761] time on a tale recorded on tape, particularly if their parents are still living, for it is said among the Refugee Blacks as in Black Africa that telling stories in full daylight makes one's father and mother die.

[174] These tales belong to an authentically African [179] accumulated store, practically unchanged in spite of the borrowing from the Creole Blacks of Paramaribo of several themes concerning automobiles, steamboats, etc., inserted in droll fashion into the traditional themes.

The usual hero of these tales is Anansi, the crafty one. [825] Anansi is the name of the Mygale spider (1). It is noteworthy,

[191]

1. The spider cycle is characteristic of the Akan (Agni-Baoulé-Abron) culture area. Anansi is the name of the Mygale spider among the Agni.

however, that this spider does not appear to play any special role in the beliefs of the Refugee Blacks and that no divinatory power is attributed to it. In fact, in the tales of which he is the hero, Anansi is nearly always represented as a man.